



Office of the State Fire Marshal

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATE FIRE MARSHAL ANNOUNCES USE OF SKY LANTERNS ILLEGAL IN ILLINOIS

Sky Lanterns Pose Serious Risk of Injuries and Fires

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) has issued notice of the official ban of sky lanterns, also known as aerial luminaries or floating lanterns, in Illinois. Sky lanterns present a potential risk for injuries and fires. The paper made lanterns contain a small candle or fuel cell that when lit, heats the air into the lantern making it rise into the air. Sky lanterns travel a long distance without any control of their final destination.

“The use of sky lanterns during any celebration can turn into tragedy if they land on someone’s house, over any flammable materials or people,” said Larry Matkaitis, State Fire Marshal. “We must protect the lives and property of the citizens we serve, and there is no question that these devices represent a threat to public safety and aviation.”

Sky lanterns are defined as “fireworks” under the Fireworks Regulation Act of Illinois, (425 ILCS 30/2 (a) which states in part that “fireworks mean and include the type of balloon which requires fire underneath to propel.” Sky lanterns have been known to cause residential and forest fires, as well as other losses. In addition, they represent a hazard to aviation and a distraction to vehicular traffic.

The OSFM joins various states in banning the use, distribution and retail sale of sky lanterns including New Hampshire, California, Minnesota, South Carolina, Hawaii, Utah, Tennessee, and Virginia. Other states including Kansas and Missouri and the New York Division of Fire Prevention and Control are also looking into adopting changes to fire codes to regulate the use of sky lanterns. The Federal Aviation Association has raised concerns over the use of floating lanterns as they can be sucked into the engines of airborne aircrafts.

On May 14, 2013, the Office of the State Fire Marshal’s Consumer Fireworks Review Committee voted to put the sky lanterns under the Prohibited Consumer Fireworks list. The OSFM then sent a notice to all fire chiefs, fire departments, municipalities and retailers statewide alerting them about the possible increase in usage of sky lanterns during summer time and special celebrations.

For more information on Illinois fireworks laws, visit the OSFM’s website at www.sfm.illinois.gov/commercial/pyrotechnicsfireworks/index.aspx.

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